

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A system for distributing software to a storage medium located on a vehicle, said system comprising:

a transmission device, a load device, and a vehicle software file; wherein said transmission device provides for making said vehicle software file accessible to said load device;

wherein said load device is a general purpose computer operated by a person having access to the vehicle; and

wherein said load device provides for loading said vehicle software file onto the vehicle storage medium, and

wherein the vehicle software file is encrypted using a vehicle identification number unique to the vehicle, whereby it cannot be loaded onto any other vehicle.

2. (original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a recipient device, wherein said recipient device provides for receiving said vehicle software file from said transmission device, and wherein said recipient device provides for distributing said vehicle software file to said load device.

3. – 6. (canceled)

7. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said load device is operated by a non-technical user.

8. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said vehicle software file is made accessible to said load device in a tangible medium.

9. (original) The system of claim 8, wherein said tangible medium is mailed to a recipient device associated with said load device.

10. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said load device provides for loading said vehicle software file onto the vehicle storage medium through a wireless network.

11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) The system of claim 2, wherein a single said transmission device transmits a plurality of vehicle software files to a plurality of recipient devices, wherein each transmitted vehicle software file has a unique encryption key based on a unique vehicle identification number and ~~The system of claim 11,~~ wherein each said unique encryption key allows each said vehicle software file to run on only one specific vehicle storage medium.

13. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said vehicle software file is an upgrade to a navigation application.

14. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said transmission device provides for making said vehicle software file accessible to said load device by: (a) creating and mailing a CD-ROM to an address associated with said load device; (b) creating and mailing a DVD to an address associated with the load device; (c) e-mailing said vehicle software file as an attachment; (d) making said vehicle software file downloadable from a web site.

15. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said load device loads said vehicle software file onto the vehicle storage medium in less than 75% of the time it would take the vehicle software file to load from a CD-ROM drive within the vehicle.

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16. (currently amended) The system of claim 1, wherein said load device loads said vehicle software file onto the vehicle storage medium by connecting said load device to the vehicle storage medium with a ~~as~~ USB connection.

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) The method of claim 25 ~~47~~, wherein said plurality of vehicle software files includes a user-assistance file that is not loaded onto any of the vehicle storage media ~~mediums~~.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 25 ~~47~~, wherein the vehicle hard drives are accessible to general purpose computers without removing the vehicle storage media ~~mediums~~ from the vehicles.

20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 25 ~~47~~, wherein the vehicle software files relating to an identical component type are generated and transmitted in a substantially simultaneous manner.

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 25 ~~47~~, wherein the loading of the vehicle software file from general purpose computer requires no more than 60% of the time required to load the vehicle software file from a CD-ROM player that is part of the vehicle.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim 25 ~~47~~, further comprising installing a vehicle hard drive into the vehicle that is configured to be removable and accessible from the general purpose computer.

24. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~25~~ 17, wherein a request for the vehicle software file is sent as an e-mail from a recipient device, and said vehicle software file is received electronically from said recipient device.

25. (currently amended) A method of distributing upgraded vehicle software files to vehicle storage ~~media~~ ~~mediums~~ through the use of general purpose computers under the control of vehicle users, said method comprising:

encrypting the vehicle software file using a vehicle identification number as a unique key;

transmitting the vehicle software file to a plurality of different recipients, wherein each recipient receives a copy of the vehicle software file that corresponds to a vehicle identification number unique to the vehicle associated with the recipient ~~and unique to the vehicle software file~~;

allowing each of the ~~a plurality of~~ recipients to load his ~~their~~ particular copy of the vehicle software file onto a vehicle hard drive in a vehicle having a ~~corresponding to the~~ vehicle identification number corresponding to the encryption key for the particular copy of the vehicle software file; and

prohibiting the loading of any copy of the vehicle software file onto a vehicle hard drive where the vehicle identification number for the vehicle does not correspond to the vehicle identification number serving as the encryption key for the vehicle software file.

26. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein a plurality of loading options are made available to each recipient, and wherein a default loading option is automatically identified in accordance with a recipient profile.

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27. (original) The method of claim 25, further comprising receiving a plurality of recipient profiles from a plurality of recipients, wherein said recipient profiles specify the frequency of permitted vehicle software file transmissions.

28. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein the vehicle software file relates to an upgrade for a navigation application being paid for by a recipient on a subscription basis.

29. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein a receiving device associated with a recipient initiates a link with the vehicle hard drive.

30. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein the vehicle hard drive is accessible to a plurality of embedded computer devices within the vehicle.

31. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein the recipient receives the vehicle software file through a recipient device, wherein the recipient loads the vehicle software file through a load device, and wherein the recipient device is not the load device.